

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6797

INFO AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1451

FOR EUR/SOV, OC AND SY

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ACOM, UR

SUBJ: PROCEDURES FOR UNACCOMPANIED DIPLOMATIC MAIL

REF: STATE 23183

1. REFTEL SEEMS TO REFLECT SOME CONFUSION ABOUT NATURE OF PROBLEM EMBASSY FACES WITH DISPATCH AND RECEIPT OF UN- ACCOMPANIED POUCHES. SOVIETS HAVE NOT RPT NOT PROHIBITED SHIPMENT OF UNACCOMPANIED POUCHES VIA THIRD COUNTRY CARRIERS. NEW SOVIET REGULATIONS, HOWEVER, PROHIBIT THE DIRECT RECEIPT AND DELIVERY OF UNACCOMPANIED POUCHES FROM AND TO THE AIRCRAFT. UNACCOMPANIED POUCHES NOW MUST BE DELIVERED AND PICKED UP FROM CUSTOMS SHED AT SHEREMETYEVO AIRPORT, WHICH ONLY OPERATES DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS MONDAY TO FRIDAY. THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE THAT ALL INCOMING UNCLASSIFIED POUCHES WOULD BE STORED IN CUSTOMS SHED AT LEAST OVERNIGHT AND FREQUENTLY FOR SEVERAL DAYS. OUTGOING POUCHES ALSO WOULD BE SUBJECT TO STORAGE AND DELAY AT SOVIET OPTION.

2. THIS PROCEDURE, IF ACCEPTED ON OUR PART, WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE, AND INDEED PROBABLE, FOR THE SOVIETS TO MONITOR THE PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE OF EMBASSY PERSONNEL. GIVEN THE HIGH PRIORITY THE KGB ATTACHES TO BUILDING DOSSIERS ON PERSONNEL ASSIGNED HERE, AND PARTICULARLY ITS INTEREST IN CONFIDENTIAL

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DETECTING PERSONAL OR FINANCIAL PROBLEMS WHICH MIGHT BECOME

APPARENT FROM PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE, IT IS LIKELY THAT A PRINCIPAL SOVIET MOTIVATION IN INTRODUCING THE NEW PROCEDURES IS TO PERMIT ACCESS TO UNCLASSIFIED MAIL. WE WOULD ALSO NOTE THAT OVER THE PAST YEAR THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL INSTANCES OF INCLUSION OF CLASSIFIED MATERIAL FROM THE DEPARTMENT TO THE POST IN UNCLASSIFIED POUCHES. OCCASIONAL MISTAKES OF THIS NATURE ARE PROBABLY UNAVOIDABLE, WHICH SHOULD INCREASE OUR DETERMINATION TO PRESERVE PROCEDURES WHICH MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY OF COMPROMISE.

3. RE PARA 4 REFTTEL, WE HOPE THAT THE DEPARTMENT CAN USE ITS LEVERAGE REGARDING SOVIET COURIERS TO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS, AS WELL AS LENINGRAD'S WITH RECEIPT OF COURIER POUCHES AT AIRPORT. IT IS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT SOVIETS WILL ATTEMPT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN COURIER-ACCOMPANIED POUCHES (WITH WHICH WE HAVE NO PROBLEM IN MOSCOW) AND UNACCOMPANIED POUCHES. SOVIET POUCHES WHICH ARE NOT COURIER ACCOMPANIED ARE, AS FAR AS WE KNOW, SENT VIA AEROFLOT IN CUSTODY AEROFLOT PERSONNEL. IF THIS IS CASE, IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO DRAW EXACT PARALLEL WITH OUR UNACCOMPANIED POUCHES ON THIRD-COUNTRY AIRLINES.

4. CURREST SITUATION IS AS FOLLOWS: ON INCOMING SHIPMENTS BY LUFTHANSA, WE ARE NOT ALLOWED BY AIRPORT AUTHORITIES TO LOAD OR UNLOAD DIRECTLY TO AND FROM PLANE, BUT ARE REQUIRED TO FOLLOW NEW PROCEDURE. WE HAVE, THEREFORE, NOT RPT NOT, DELIVERED OUTGOING POUCHES TO CUSTOMS SHED FOR THESE FLIGHTS, ALTHOUGH INCOMING POUCHES CONTINUE TO ARRIVE ON LUFTHANSA AND ARE HELD OVERNIGHT BY CUSTOMS BEFORE WE ARE ALLOWED TO PICK THEM UP. REGARDING PAN AM FLIGHT, WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY AIRPORT AUTHORITIES THAT WE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED ACCESS TO AIRCRAFT, BUT HAVE TAKEN UP MATTER WITH MFA ON BASIS 1968-69 EXCHANGE OF NOTES. MFA APPARENTLY AGREES THAT EXCHANGE OF NOTES GIVES US ACCESS TO PAN AM (BUT NOT THIRD COUNTRY AIRLINES) AND WE WILL FIND OUT THIS WEEKEND WHETHER AIRPORT AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN SO INSTRUCTED. IN SUM, WE ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT WE CAN MAINTAIN FORMER PROCEDURES IN REGARD TO PAN AM FLIGHTS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT SOVIETS ARE NOT PREPARED TO RETREAT IN REGARD TO THIRD-COUNTRY AIRLINES.

5. WHATEVER THE PROSPECTS FOR SOLVING THIS PROBLEM BY USING
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THE DEPARTMENT'S LEVERAGE, WE WOULD NOTE THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY FACED WITH TASK OF DISPATCHING AND RECEIVING THREE UNACCOMPANIED POUCH SHIPMENTS EACH WAY EACH WEEK. IT WAS TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH THE CONCERNS OUTLINED IN PARA 2 ABOVE THAT WE SUGGESTED AS AN INTERIM RPT INTERIM MEASURE THAT OUTGOING UNCLASSIFIED POUCHES, EXCEPT THOSE WE ARE PERMITTED TO LOAD ON PAN AM, BE DISPATCHED WITH THE COURIER RUNS TO VIENNA. WHAT THIS INVOLVES, IN CONCRETE TERMS, IS ADDING TWO OR THREE

UNCLASSIFIED POUCHES TO THE CLASSIFIED POUCHES, LOADING THEM IN THE BELLY OF THE PLANE WITH THE CLASSIFIED POUCHES (UNDER SUPERVISION OF MOSCOW C&R PERSONNEL) AND DELIVERING THE AWB TO THE COURIER. THE COURIER THEN GIVES THE AWB TO C&R VIENNA WHICH CONFIRMS PRE-ARRANGED ONWARD SHIPMENT. THE COURIER'S DUTY, THEREFORE, WOULD CONSIST OF CARRYING AN AWB FROM MOSCOW TO VIENNA. WE ASSUME THAT THE DEPARTMENT DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF OUR REQUEST WHEN IT CONCLUDED THAT IT WOULD IMPOSE A "SIGNIFICANT" EXTRA BURDEN ON THE COURIER LOAD (PARA 2 REFTEL).

6. IN VIEW OF THE CONSIDERATION ABOVE, I URGE THAT THE DEPARTMENT RECONSIDER OUR REQUEST TO INCLUDE UNCLASSIFIED POUCHES WITH THE COURIER RUNS TO VIENNA, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS PROCEDURES CAN BE AGREED UPON WITH THE SOVIETS WHICH WILL PERMIT US TO DELIVER AND RECEIVE UNACCOMPANIED POUCHES TO AND FROM THE AIRCRAFT. MATLOCK

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